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JANUARY RED MEAT PRODUCTION

West Virginia -- Commercial red meat production during January 2006 totaled 600,000 pounds, the same as last year. This is 21 percent below the December 2005 production. Commercial red meat production is the carcass weight after slaughter including beef, veal, pork, and lamb and mutton. Individual commodity production is total live weight of commercial slaughter.

Commercial cattle slaughter totaled 863,000 pounds live weight, down slightly from January 2005. Cattle slaughter totaled 900 head, the same as the previous year. The average live weight, at 1,006 pounds, was up 64 pounds from a year ago.

Commercial calf slaughter was not published to avoid disclosing individual operations.

Commercial hog slaughter totaled 143,000 pounds live weight, down 7 percent from last year. Hog slaughter totaled 500 head, down 100 head from the previous year. The average live weight, at 272 pounds, was up 13 pounds from the previous year.

Commercial sheep and lamb slaughter was not published to avoid disclosing individual operations.

United States -- Commercial red meat production totaled 3.89 billion pounds in January, up 7 percent from the 3.65 billion pounds produced in January 2005.

Beef production, at 2.04 billion pounds, was 7 percent above the previous year. Cattle slaughter totaled 2.64 million head, up 5 percent from January 2005. The average live weight was up 19 pounds from the previous year, at 1,281 pounds.

Veal production totaled 12.5 million pounds, 6 percent below January a year ago. Calf slaughter totaled 55,700 head, down 18 percent from January 2005. The average live weight was 39 pounds above last year, at 368 pounds.

Pork production totaled 1.82 billion pounds, up 7 percent from the previous year. Hog kill totaled 8.92 million head, 5 percent above January 2005. The average live weight was 3 pounds above the previous year, at 273 pounds.

Lamb and mutton production, at 16.2 million pounds, was up 12 percent from January 2005. Sheep slaughter totaled 223,700 head, 7 percent above last year. The average live weight was 144 pounds, up 6 pounds from January a year ago.

January 2005 contained 21 weekdays (including one holiday) and 5 Saturdays.

January 2006 contained 22 weekdays (including two holidays) and 4 Saturdays.

ANNUAL LIVESTOCK SLAUGHTER

West Virginia -- Red meat production in commercial plants totaled 6.2 million pounds during 2005. This was 11 percent below the 2004 production of 7.0 million. The number of Federally and Non Federally inspected slaughter plants totaled 29 on January 1, 2006, down 2 plants from January 1, 2005.

West Virginia with 2004 Comparisons:

Beef production – 8.86 million pounds, down 3 percent.

Cattle slaughtered - 9,200 head, down 4 percent.

Pork production – 1.95 million pounds, down 8 percent.

Hogs slaughtered – 7,700 head, down 7 percent.

Average live weight of cattle slaughtered in 2005 was 966 pounds, up 13 pounds. The average live weight for hogs was 254 pounds, down 2 pounds.

Sheep and Lambs and Calves information was not published to avoid disclosure of individual operations.

United States -- Red meat production for the United States totaled 45.8 billion pounds in 2005, slightly higher than the previous year. Red meat includes beef, veal, pork, and lamb and mutton. Red meat production in commercial plants totaled 45.7 billion pounds. On farm production totaled 135 million pounds.

Beef production, totaled 24.8 billion pounds, slightly higher than the previous year. **Veal production** totaled 165 million pounds, down 6 percent from last year, setting a new record low. **Pork production**, at 20.7 billion pounds, was slightly higher than the previous year, setting a new record high. **Lamb and mutton production** set a new record low, totaling 191 million pounds, 4 percent below the previous record low set a year ago.

Commercial cattle slaughter during 2005 totaled 32.4 million head, down 1 percent from 2004, with federal inspection comprising 98.3 percent of the total. The average live weight was 1,256 pounds, up 16 pounds from a year ago. **Steers** comprised 52.8 percent of the total federally inspected cattle slaughter, **heifers** 30.7 percent, **dairy cows** 7.1 percent, **other cows** 7.9 percent, and **bulls** 1.6 percent.

Commercial calf slaughter totaled 734,400 head, down 13 percent from a year ago with 97.7 percent under federal inspection. The average live weight was 353 pounds, up 23 pounds from a year earlier.

Commercial hog slaughter totaled 103.6 million head, slightly higher than 2004 with 99.0 percent of the hogs slaughtered under federal inspection. The average live weight was up 2 pounds from last year, at 269 pounds. **Barrows and gilts** comprised 96.7 percent of the total federally inspected hog slaughter.

Commercial sheep and lamb slaughter, at 2.70 million head, was down 5 percent from 2004 with 94.7 percent comprised by federal inspection. The average live weight was up 2 pounds from 2004 to 138 pounds.

There were 807 plants slaughtering under federal inspection on January 1, 2006 compared with 827 last year. Of these, 658 plants slaughtered at least one head of cattle during 2005 with the 13 largest plants slaughtering almost 54 percent of the total cattle killed. Hogs were slaughtered at 631 plants, with the 13 largest plants accounting for slightly over 58 percent of the total. Likewise, 11 of the 227 plants that slaughtered calves accounted for nearly 79 percent of the total and 4 of the 497 plants that slaughtered sheep or lambs in 2005 comprised about 67 percent of the total head.

Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, and Texas accounted for almost 53 percent of the United States commercial red meat production in 2005, similar to 2004.

TROUT SALES

West Virginia -- There were 26 operations that produced trout for sale and/or distribution in 2005. Seventeen operations were commercial producers, while 14 operations distributed trout/trout eggs for restoration, conservation, and recreational purposes. The 17 commercial trout producers in West Virginia had a total value of fish sales of 348 thousand dollars for the 12 month period from January 1, 2005 - December 31, 2005. This was a 50 percent decrease from the 694 thousand dollars in fish sales during the same period in 2004. Fish 12 inches or longer accounted for 95 percent

of total sales of fish sold. Trout losses for the period totaled 32,000 pounds, down from last year's 59,000 pounds.

The value of trout distributed for restoration, conservation, and recreational purposes is estimated at 1.82 million dollars, down 16 percent from the 2004 value of 2.16 million dollars.

United States -- The total value of all sales, both fish and eggs, received by trout growers in the 20 selected States totaled 74.2 million dollars during 2005, an increase of 4 percent from 2004. For the Nation, sales of fish totaled 69.1 million dollars for 2005, while egg sales totaled 5.14 million dollars. The State of Idaho accounted for 51 percent of the total value of fish sold.

The number of **trout 12 inches and longer** sold during 2005 totaled 55.5 million fish, up 12 percent from the previous year. The average price per pound was \$1.05, up 2 cents from 2004. The value of sales for the 2005 marketing year was 62.6 million dollars, up 5 percent from 2004. Based on the dollar value, 67 percent were sold to processors and 19 percent were sold to fee and recreational fishing establishments.

The number of **6"- 12" trout** sold during 2005 totaled 4.79 million fish, a decrease of 13 percent from 2004. The average price per pound was \$2.82 during 2005, up 13 cents from the 2004 price. The total value of sales was 5.18 million dollars during 2005, an 11 percent decrease from the previous year. The major sales outlet for 6"-12" trout was to fee and recreational fishing establishments accounting for 51 percent of the total sales, followed by government agencies with 20 percent.

The number of **1"- 6" trout** sold during 2005 totaled 7.06 million, a 27 percent increase from the previous year. The average value per 1,000 fish was \$187.00 during 2005, a \$13.00 increase from 2004. The total value of sales was 1.32 million dollars, up 37 percent from last year's total.

Trout egg sales in 2005 totaled 307 million eggs, up 6 percent from the 290 million eggs sold during the previous year. The average value per 1,000 eggs during 2005 was \$16.70, unchanged from 2004. The total value of trout egg sales during 2005 was 5.14 million dollars, an increase of 6 percent from the 4.83 million dollars in egg sales during the previous year.

Distributed Trout -- Trout distributed for restoration, conservation, and recreational purposes, primarily by State and Federal hatcheries, included 6.34 million 12" or longer fish, 52.0 million 6"-12", and 52.6 million fingerlings. The estimated value of fish and eggs distributed totaled 74.3 million dollars, up 19 percent from 2004.

Losses of Fish -- Total losses of all trout intended for sale were 32.1 million fish during 2005. The top three categories were 51 percent lost to disease, 19 percent to drought, and 21 percent to "other" causes. Losses to trout raised for distribution were primarily due to disease (62 percent) and predators (28 percent).

ANNUAL EGG PRODUCTION

West Virginia -- Egg production during the year ending November 30, 2005 totaled 261 million eggs. This was 4 percent below the 2004 production of 273 million eggs.

Layer numbers during 2005 averaged 1.17 million, down 7 percent from 2004. The average annual production per layer was 224 eggs, 7 eggs more than the 2004 average. Pullets for 2005 totaled 589,000, down 28 percent from 2004. Other chickens totaled 140,000 in 2005, down 20 percent from 2004.

Total number of chickens on hand on December 1, 2005 (excluding commercial broilers) was 1.86 million head, down 18 percent from 2004.

The total value of all chickens on December 1, 2005 was \$9.8 million, down 22 percent from the December 1, 2004 value of \$12.7 million. The average value of \$5.30 per bird on December 1, 2005 was down 30 cents from 2004.

United States -- Egg production during the year ending November 30, 2005 totaled a record high 90.0 billion eggs, up 1 percent from 2004. Table egg production, at 76.9 billion eggs, was up 1 percent from the previous year. Hatching egg production, at 13.1 billion eggs, was up 2 percent from 2004.

Layer numbers during 2005 averaged 344 million, up slightly from the year earlier. The annual average production per layer on hand in 2005 was 262 eggs, up slightly from the 2004 average of 261.

Total number of chickens on hand on December 1, 2005 (excluding commercial broilers) was 453 million birds, down slightly from last year.

The total value of all chickens on December 1, 2005 was \$1.13 billion, up 1 percent from December 1, 2004. The average value increased from \$2.48 per bird on December 1, 2004, to \$2.50 per bird on December 1, 2005.

HONEY PRODUCTION

West Virginia -- Honey production in 2005 from producers with five or more colonies totaled 408,000 pounds, down 87,000 pounds from 2004. There were 8,000 producing colonies in 2005, down 1,000 colonies from 2004. Yield per colony averaged 51 pounds, down 4 pounds from 55 in 2004. Honey stocks on December 15, 2005, were reported at 102,000 pounds, down 81,000 pounds from the amount reported in 2004.

Prices for the 2005 crop averaged 124 cents per pound, compared to 141 cents per pound in 2004. Value of production totaled 506,000 dollars, down 192,000 dollars from 2004.

United States -- Honey production in 2005 from producers with five or more colonies totaled 175 million pounds, down 5 percent from 2004. There were 2.41

million colonies producing honey in 2005, down 6 percent from 2004. Yield per colony averaged 72.5 pounds, up 1 percent from the 71.8 pounds in 2004. Colonies which produced honey in more than one State were counted in each State where the honey was produced, therefore yields per colony may be understated. Colonies were not included if honey was not harvested. Producer honey stocks were 62.4 million pounds on December 15, 2005, up 2 percent from a year earlier. Stocks held by producers exclude stocks held under the commodity loan program.

Honey prices decreased during 2005 to 90.4 cents, down 15 percent from 106.9 cents in 2004. Prices are based on retail sales by producers and sales to private processors and cooperatives. State level honey prices reflect the portions of honey sold through retail, co-op and private channels. Honey prices for each color class are derived by weighing quantities sold for each marketing channel. Honey prices for 2005 were lower than the previous year for all color class totals.

FARM LABOR

There were 796,000 **hired workers** on the Nation's farms and ranches during the week of January 8-14, 2006, up 3 percent from a year ago. Of these hired workers, 616,000 workers were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 180,000 workers.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an **average wage** of \$10.11 per hour during the January 2006 reference week, up 33 cents from a year earlier. **Field workers** received an average of \$9.15 per hour, up 44 cents from last January, while **livestock workers** earned \$9.25 per hour compared with \$9.20 a year earlier. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at \$9.19 per hour, was up 29 cents from last year.

The **number of hours worked** averaged 38.2 hours for hired workers during the survey week, up 3 percent from a year ago.

The largest **increases in the number of hired farm workers** from last year occurred in the Pacific (Oregon and Washington), Corn Belt I (Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio), Delta (Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi), and Northeast II (Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania) regions. Despite very wet weather in the Pacific region, continued expansion in the nursery and greenhouse industries increased the demand for hired workers. In the Corn Belt I region, warm temperatures and midweek rains caused extremely muddy conditions in feedlots, corrals, and pastures, stressing livestock and increasing the need for hired workers. Unseasonably warm, dry weather in the Delta region allowed field and farm activities to progress rapidly. Also, many producers were still cleaning up the damage from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Therefore, more hired workers were needed. In the Northeast II region, above normal temperatures allowed some preparations for spring planting to begin, heightening the demand for hired workers.

The largest **decreases in the number of hired farm workers** from a year ago were in California and in the Southern Plains (Oklahoma and Texas), Northern Plains (Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota), and Appalachian II (Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia) regions. In California, heavy rains and flooding for two weeks prior to the reference week limited field activity in central and northern areas. Also, tight security at the Mexican border and strong competition from the higher paying construction industry continued to cause farm worker shortages. Thus, fewer workers were hired during the reference week. Extremely dry conditions in the Southern Plains region caused many livestock producers to liquidate their herds, lessening the demand for hired workers. In the Appalachian II and Northern Plains regions, the unseasonably warm weather decreased the need for supplemental feeding. Therefore, fewer livestock workers were needed.

Hired farm worker **wage rates** were generally above a year ago in most regions. The largest increases occurred in the Corn Belt I, Southeast (Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina), Northeast II and Corn Belt II (Iowa and Missouri) regions. In the Corn Belt I and II regions, the warm weather led to considerable movement of grain to market, heightening the demand for highly paid truck drivers and machine operators. The higher wages in the Southeast region were due to the increased demand for highly skilled machine operators and truck drivers on livestock and poultry operations and a larger percentage of nursery and greenhouse workers in the work force. The higher wages in the Northeast II region were due to a higher than normal percentage of nursery and greenhouse workers.

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